



Shattering The Glass Ceiling: It's Long Overdue

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What is the *Glass Ceiling*?

The Glass Ceiling, an invisible upper limit in organizations, is a metaphor for the difficult-to-see formal and informal barriers that hinder women from getting promotions, pay raises and further professional opportunities that would enable a strong, upward career trajectory.

Why This Matters

- Evidence of the glass ceiling sends a message to young girls and women everywhere that they are not as good or as valuable as men.
- It displays that women cannot achieve what men can, and if they believe they can, they shouldn't because they won't get far.
- Women are hitting the glass ceiling earlier than people realize, men are off to the races and women are starting to see hurdles right out of the gate.
- There is an overall lack of female representation in executive positions.
- Sex discrimination exists in organizations and prevents women from rising to the top.

Key Findings

- The overall labor market remains sharply segregated by sex, with female executives concentrated into certain types of jobs - mostly staff/support jobs - that offer little opportunity for getting to the top.
- The highest ranking women in most industries are in non-operating areas such as personnel, public relations, or, occasionally, finance specialties that seldom lead to the most powerful top-management positions.
- More than 80% of executive women in a *Wall Street Journal/Gallup* study said they believe there are disadvantages to being a woman in the business world.
- A significant majority of women, 70%, believed they are paid less than men of equal ability.

Future Research Directions

Research should continue to examine:

- The number of women in executive positions
- The effects of women in executive positions
- The extent to which a lack of women in top positions affects future generations of women within organizational settings
- Best practices among organizations who are working to support and elevate female employees in a more equitable manner

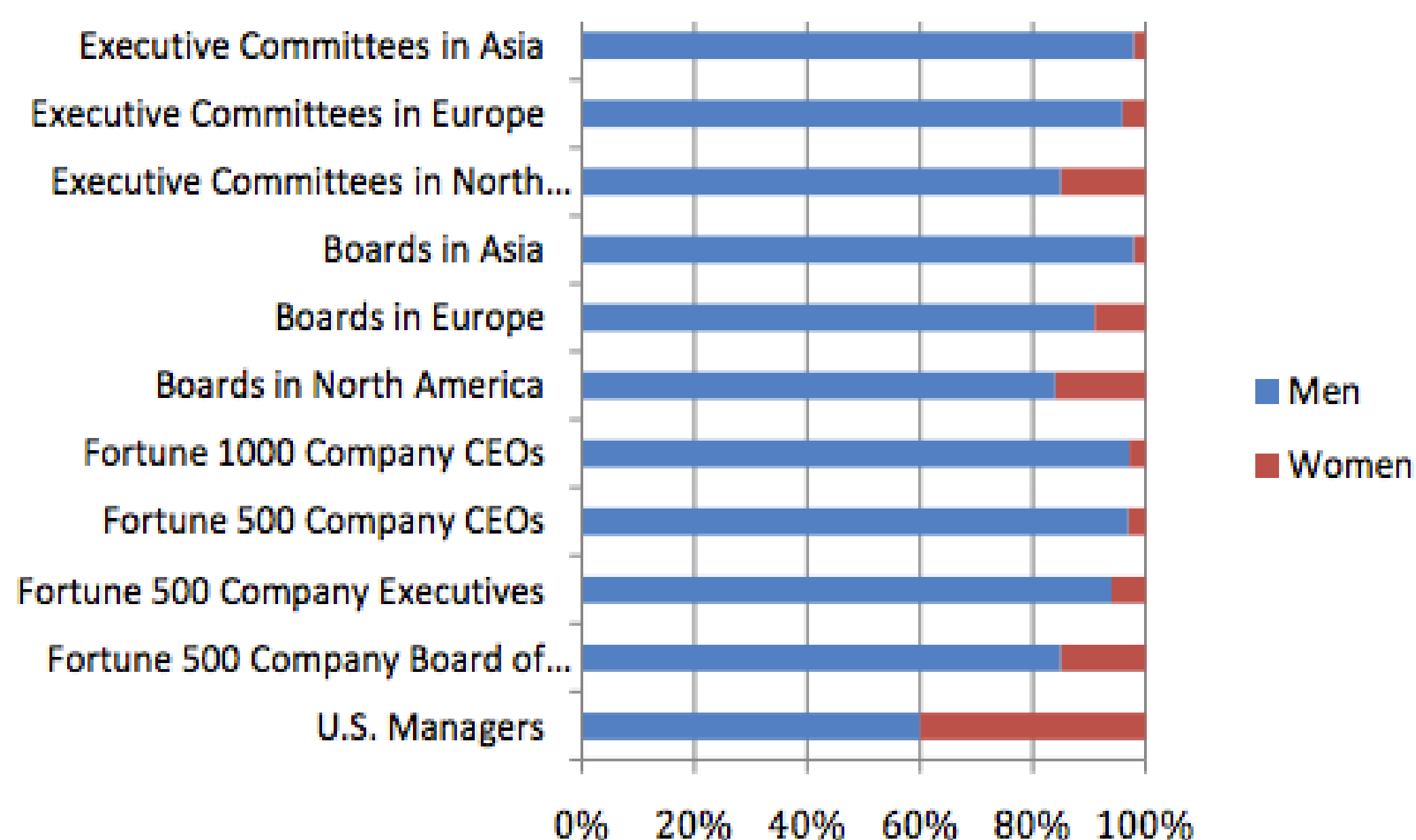


FIGURE 1: WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT Source: *Re-Examining the Female Path to Leadership Positions in Business, 2011*

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